

School Enrollment Task Force Meeting
Town Hall
730 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA
Tuesday, January 5, 2016
7:00 PM

Present: Kathleen Bodie, Superintendent of the Schools
Adam Chapdelaine, Town Manager
John Cole, Permanent Town Building Committee
Joe Curro, Board of Selectman
Charlie Foskett, Capital Planning & Finance
William Hayner, School Committee
Diane Mahon, Board of Selectmen
Cindy Starks, School Committee
Al Tosti, Finance Committee
Jeff Thielman, School Committee

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of November 30, 2015 and December 9, 2015 were approved.

Opening of Meeting

Meeting Opened at 7:05 PM

Update on Enrollment Forecast

Dr. Bodie reviewed the modified McKibben Report. The task force discussed the differences between the district forecast and the McKibben forecast; the trends are compatible with the McKibben report accounting for more variables.

- ◆ Discussion of a graphic map updated by HMFH on the Ottoson Middle School is still a challenge to deal with as well as the Thompson and the Hardy schools.
- ◆ Supt. Bodie gave an update on classroom availability, there are 11 classrooms available this year and only four next year. Dr. Bodie spoke to the challenge of redistricting to use extra classes due to geographic obstacles, but did point out that district changes between the Hardy and Thompson could help. Satellite class space is not doable based on necessary student support services.

Update on AHS Status in MSBA Program

Supt. Bodie reported that Arlington High School will be before the MSBA Board of Directors at their January 27th meeting to consider moving forward with approval for a Feasibility Study.

Discussion: Recommendation to Special Town Meeting

Mr. Hayner recommended that the task force approve a permanent addition for the 2017-2018 school years and temporary modulars at the Thompson School for the 2016-2017.

Mr. Foskett stated that this is a school administrative decision to determine the use of available classrooms in district by moving district lines. That we must exercise caution to ensure that we do not overspend at the elementary level, that it would be a disservice to the town if we overspend and that we may not have finances to deal with the OMS.

Mr. Tosti stated that combining grades at Hardy and Thompson would be a minor shift in redistricting in that area and help with the distribution of students. He is willing to look at two modulars at the Thompson but prefers to wait for the Fall 2016 enrollment figures before committing to permanent construction at the Thompson.

Mr. Cole stated that we must maintain equity in how we allocate money for the schools; secondary schools have not received any funds, he would like to see if the pairing of multiple schools to utilize available classrooms.

Mr. Hayner made a motion to recommend that Town Meeting approves to fund two temporary modulars for the Thompson School for the 2016-2017 school year. Second by Ms. Starks
Motion withdrawn

Mr. Cole would like to see an analysis of enrollment next year, even if McKibben is off by 50% we would still have a classroom deficit; families could be split between Thompson/Hardy paired schools.

On a motion by Mr. Tosti seconded by Mr. Cole was unanimously:

Voted that the Superintendent and the Town Manager examine the following possible options showing the financial impact of each as well as the pros and cons:

- ◆ Two modulars at the Thompson School.
- ◆ Busing to the Peirce School.
- ◆ Creating a Hardy/Thompson district with redistribution of students.

Ms. Starks was against busing students to the Peirce School noting that if it was the 5th grade class these would be the same students that were bused to either Stratton, Bishop or Hardy during the Thompson rebuild.

Mr. Thielman recommended that the debt exclusion in November bundle all of the school projects together (Ottoson Middle School, Arlington High School and elementary space in East Arlington).

Public Comment from Community/Parents

Parents and Community members voiced concern on the following:

- ◆ Busing 5th grade students, would exclude those students of leadership opportunities, are the same students that were bused to the Stratton during the rebuild project.
- ◆ Incredible afterschool programs at the Thompson and Hardy busing would prevent students from attending.
- ◆ Consider double shifting at the middle and high school instead of constructing a new building.
- ◆ More conversation about learning outcomes and best learning environments.
- ◆ Impacts of class size: special education referrals and outcomes look at innovative magnet schools/programs.
- ◆ Decisions should be based on values but all options need to be fully investigated to legitimize decisions.
- ◆ Parents come to Arlington for quality of experience in schools, it can't be done piecemeal.
- ◆ Have copies of proposals for all in attendance.

New Business

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 12th at Town Hall at 7:00 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Written by:

Kathleen Bodie, Superintendent of Schools
Adam Chapdelaine, Town Manager

Submitted by

Approved March 8, 2016

Karen Tassone